

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 747
By Naifeh

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of John Mack Edwards of
Tipton County.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly were greatly saddened to learn of the passing of John Mack Edwards; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Edwards was an exemplary public servant, consummate professional, and dedicated civic activist who worked assiduously to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, born in Tipton County on January 25, 1922 to Mattie Lou Wright Edwards and Artie Edwards, John Mack Edwards attended Plummer's Grove School in the Plummer's Grove community, named for and settled by the brother of his great-great grandfather, Albert Edwards; and

WHEREAS, a member of our nation's greatest generation, John Mack Edwards proudly served in the United States Army in World War II, receiving decorations for his service as a medic in European Theatre campaigns in the Rhineland, the Ardennes, Northern France and Central Europe; and

WHEREAS, a tireless worker his entire life, as a young man Mr. Edwards worked full-time alongside his brother Willie to support his mother and younger brother Lee; and

WHEREAS, his responsibility and devotion won him the post of Shop Seward at Local 6908, United Steel Workers of America, AFL-CIO, during his years at Sandusky Manufacturing; and

WHEREAS, an active member of his community who answered the calling to make a difference, in 1962 Mr. Edwards was elected president of the Tipton County Branch of the NAACP, a position he held for 26 years; and

WHEREAS, he also was elected president of the Tipton County Chapter of the Tennessee Voters Council; and

WHEREAS, John Mack Edwards' deep desire for change would see him organize and lead the biggest march in Tennessee at that time, as citizens marched from the Covington Square to the Tipton County Board of Education in support of school integration and fair treatment of all God's children; and

WHEREAS, with the courage of his convictions, in 1972 John Mack Edwards successfully ran for the office of Constable, becoming the first African American to hold an elective office in Tipton County since the early 1900s; and

WHEREAS, a revered member of the Charlie Porter Smith Post of the American Legion, Mr. Edwards also was a Master Mason of Evening Star Lodge No. 62 and was appointed a Tennessee Colonel Aide-de-Camp by the Governor of Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, in 1989, John Mack Edwards once again won elective office, providing uncompromised leadership as an Alderman for the City of Covington, a post he held until his death; and

WHEREAS, a deeply spiritual man, Mr. Edwards attended his first worship service in 1934 at Antioch Baptist Church and was baptized in 1952 at Canaan Baptist Church, which he faithfully attended from 1937 until his passing, serving for 21 years as president of the Usher Board and for 50 years as an usher, and as an ordained deacon from 1968 and a member of the Senior Choir until his health failed; and

WHEREAS, deeply devoted to his family, John Mack Edwards is survived by his devoted wife, Alma Johnson Edwards; sons, Michael Lee Edwards, John Embry Edwards, and Harold Earskine Edwards Brown; stepson, William Mitchell; sister-in-law, LaVerne Epps Edwards; nieces, Marsha Edwards, Stella Edwards, Mattie Edwards-Kemp and Lynda Edwards; and nephews, Emmett Edwards, William Edwards and Keith Edwards; and a beloved host of other family members and dear friends; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Edwards leaves behind an indelible legacy of integrity and probity in public life, compassion and loyalty in private life, and diligence and dedication in all his chosen endeavors; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to remember the bountiful life of this exceptional public servant and human being; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we honor the memory of John Mack Edwards, reflecting fondly upon his impeccable character and his stalwart commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we express our sympathy and offer our condolences to the family of Mr. Edwards.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.